

REMARKS

At the outset, the Examiner is thanked for the thorough review and consideration of the pending application. The Office Action dated January 28, 2008 has been received and its contents carefully reviewed.

Claims 1, 14, 15, 17, 25, 30 and 31 are currently amended. Claims 5-8, 13, 16, 21-24, 29 and 32 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1-4, 9-12, 14, 15, 17-20, 25-28, 30 and 31 are currently pending. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, claims 1-4, 6, 9-20, 22 and 25-32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claims 1-4, 6, 11, 12, 17-20, 22, 27 and 28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,043,511 to Kim (hereinafter "Kim") in view of U.S. Publication No. 2002/0081847 to Jo et al. (hereinafter "Jo"), and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,739,877 to Onisawa et al. (hereinafter "Onisawa"). Claims 9, 10, 25 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kim in view of Jo, in view of Onisawa, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,091,464 to Song (hereinafter "Song"). Claims 13-16 and 29-32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kim, in view of Jo, in view of Onisawa, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,674,502 to Terakado et al. (hereinafter "Terakado").

Claim 1, as amended, is allowable over the cited references in that claim 1 recites a combination of elements including, for example, "... a buffer layer between the substrate and the first barrier metal layer; ... wherein the metallic material is one of tantalum (Ta) and titanium (Ti);" None of the cited references, singly or in combination, teaches or suggests at least these features of the claimed invention. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 and claims 2-4, 9-12, 14 and 15, which depend therefrom, are allowable over the cited references.

Claim 17, as amended, is allowable over the cited references in that claim 17 recites a combination of elements including, for example, "... forming a buffer layer between the

substrate and the first barrier metal layer; ... wherein the metallic material is one of tantalum (Ta) and titanium (Ti);" None of the cited references, singly or in combination, teaches or suggests at least these features of the claimed invention. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 17 and claims 18-20, 25-28, 30 and 31, which depend therefrom, are allowable over the cited references.

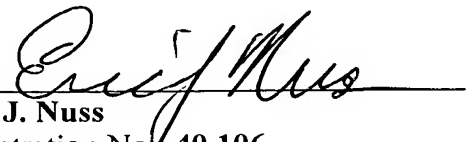
Applicants believe the foregoing remarks place the application in condition for allowance and early, favorable action is respectfully solicited.

If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at (202) 496-7500 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance. All correspondence should continue to be sent to the below-listed address.

If these papers are not considered timely filed by the Patent and Trademark Office, then a petition is hereby made under 37 C.F.R. §1.136, and any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 for any necessary extension of time, or any other fees required to complete the filing of this response, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0911. Please credit any overpayment to deposit Account No. 50-0911. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.

Dated: 24 April 2008

Respectfully submitted,

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